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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 005243

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SUBJECT: MEXICAN SENATORS PLANNING U.S. VISIT TO DISCUSS
COOPERATION

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Senior-level Mexican Senators are considering traveling to Washington for the purpose of meeting with their counterparts from the U.S. Congress. We understand President Calderon and PAN Party stalwarts in the Mexican Congress seek to use these trips to lay the groundwork for an eventual package of enhanced U.S./Mexican cooperation in the fight against organized crime. Post expects Mexico's Embassy will be in contact with the Department regarding the visits and relies on the Department's judgment regarding the best time for the visits and a good agenda of meetings. END SUMMARY.

Looking for Cooperation and More Respect

¶2. (C) Senator Ricardo Garcia Cervantes (PAN), President of the Senate's Foreign Relations Commission on North America, told visiting WHA/MEX Office Director Ian Brownlee and Acting PolCouns September 20 that he would like to visit Washington, preferably mid-October, primarily for the purpose of meeting with senior U.S. Congressional leaders to discuss building a stronger relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. Mexico needs to promote greater prosperity to make it stronger and achieve in twenty years what takes most nations fifty. Garcia remarked that Mexico was dedicating greater resources to combating organized crime and signaled openness to greater cooperation with the U.S. However, violence was taking its toll on Mexico's political will. He allowed that Mexico only had "two years" to prove that the increased funds and lives dedicated to this fight were producing progress. Otherwise, the funding would dry up. Mexico was not looking for the U.S. to provide "assistance," particularly in the form of men on the ground, but rather "cooperation" in the form of intelligence and technology. He noted the technology the U.S. brings to bear in inspecting goods entering the U.S. He urged the U.S. to dedicate that same technology to inspect goods departing the U.S. as part of an effort to curb the flow of illegal arms into Mexico.

¶3. (C) Garcia invited Senators Carlos Jimenez (PRI) and Tomas Torres (PRD) to participate in the meeting. Garcia insisted Mexico considered its relationship with the U.S. its most important. However, both he and Jimenez conveyed disappointment over the lack of attention senior U.S. Congressional representatives had afforded Mexico in the past and stressed the need for more expansive, substance contact with their Congressional contacts. All three Senators wanted to see more resources dedicated to the North American Development Bank. They thought disproportionate resources were dedicated to security and wanted to see greater funds dedicated to development projects.

Laying the Groundwork for Cooperation with the U.S.

¶4. (C) On September 25, Garcia in his capacity as President of the Senate Foreign Relations Commission on North America

presented a resolution to the Senate seeking agreement on his making his trip to the U.S., accompanied by other Senate leaders, for the purpose of initiating dialogue with U.S. Congressional counterparts about deepening cooperation with the U.S. in the fight against drug trafficking. Garcia's senior advisor, Karla Mendoza, who probably drafted the resolution (sent by email 9/27 to WHA/MEX), conceded it took some jabs at the U.S., but insisted Garcia's overarching intent was to lay the groundwork and establish a constructive tone for enhanced U.S./Mexican cooperation. Mendoza noted that Garcia had been in contact with President Calderon on this initiative but maintained the Presidency had not/not cleared off on Garcia's Senate resolution. Some of the resolution's more salient points include the following:

-- Drug trafficking makes no distinction when it comes to nationalities or damage to society in general.

-- President Calderon has assumed responsibility for recovering Mexican society with all of the State's forces.

-- On a daily basis, dozens die, including civilians, police, and soldiers, all at the hands of the mafia.

-- Mexico has increased international cooperation with others that share our problems and their consequences; the Senate has ratified extradition treaties with the aim of not allowing criminals to escape justice.

-- Mexico's money laundering legislation and Penal Code have been brought into accord with the regional framework.

-- Drug trafficking has left its mark not only in the form of criminal networks and corruption but also rising levels of

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drug consumption by youth.

-- Our neighbor the U.S. suffers the same problems.

-- The U.S. must recognize its co-responsibility and obligation to do its part) not with rhetoric) but with common and concrete efforts.

-- Mexico does not need men, nor talent, nor much less the operational presence of foreigners. Rather, in this age of advanced technology, Mexico needs the U.S. to dedicate its own equipment and intelligence systems to the fight against crime) here and in the U.S.

-- The U.S. right to bear arms cannot be allowed to undermine the shared responsibility of the U.S. and Mexico to confront international arms trafficking.

-- The U.S. uses high technology to detect everything that enters its country. Why can't it use that technology to detect arms trafficked from the U.S. into Mexico?

-- Both Mexico and the U.S. should be committed to cooperation given shared responsibility.

-- Requests authorization from the Senate to take up pertinent discussions with U.S. Congressional counterparts to explore broader and more efficient cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking.

-- It is not the time to build walls but rather construct alliances to combat the threat of drug trafficking and organized crime in our region.

-- Cooperation is the ideal instrument to achieve this end.

... And Another Senate Visit to the U.S. in the Works

15. (C) Separately, Senator Adriana Gonzalez, Vice-President of the Senate's Foreign Relations Commission, told WHA/MEX

deskoff Mary Stickles and Acting PolCouns September 26 that Senator Santiago Creel (PAN), the President of the Senate's Political Coordination Board, was looking at Garcia's trip as an advance for a separate Mexican Senate trip to the U.S. he would like to organize. Gonzalez signaled Creel would like to travel to the U.S. in late October as the head of a delegation that would include fellow Coordination Board members and Senators Mario Fabio Beltrones (PRI) and Carlos Navarrete (PRD) amongst others. Gonzalez remarked, only half jokingly, that in addition to meeting with Congressional leaders from both parties, she would welcome meetings with Presidential hopefuls Senators Clinton and Obama. Gonzalez said that Creel was coordinating with Garcia on his visit to the U.S. (NOTE: The Senate's Political Coordination Board represents the most powerful players in the Mexican Senate working behind the scenes over recent months to move key reform legislation ahead. END NOTE.) Gonzalez remarked that Creel maintains close contact with President Calderon regarding key priorities including building broader cooperation with the U.S. in combating drug trafficking.

16. (C) COMMENT. Post regards the Mexican Senate's desire to engage its U.S. counterparts as inevitable and probably unavoidable. It will require care and close coordination with the GOM to keep their role constructive and focused mutual security issues and away from migration. Mendoza, Senator Garcia's advisor, told Acting PolCons that Garcia's visit was to serve as an advance for Creel's follow-on, higher level visit. However, she also said Garcia and Creel were looking to Washington for guidance about the best time to come. Garcia was prepared to look at postponing his trip if that were our recommendation. We understand these Senators are also working through Mexico's Embassy to pursue meetings with U.S. Congressional leaders, the State Department, and other offices. We rely on the Department for guidance about the best time for visits to the U.S. and preparing a full schedule of meetings. END COMMENT.

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